Study Guide

DST

DISPATCHER SELECTION TOOL

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This Study Guide is intended solely for use by candidates/applicants who are preparing to participate in a testing process for a municipal, county, state or federal agency that will administer the Dispatcher Selection Tool™, herein referred to as the DST™, as part of its testing and selection process.

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Preparing for a Dispatcher Career

The purpose of this guide is to enable you to efficiently and effectively prepare to participate in the administration of the DST™, a state-of-the-art test, to identify those individuals who will excel in dispatcher careers. The DST™ will be a critical hurdle in the pathway toward achieving an employment opportunity as a dispatcher. This guide seeks to provide critical information about the DST™ that will allow you to prepare for the test-taking experience, hone your cognitive skills, minimize test-related anxiety and ultimately perform at your peak level.

Dispatcher examinations can vary greatly in form and composition; therefore, we encourage you to be discerning about any other resources you may use to prepare for the DST™. This guide was created specifically for the DST™ by the publisher of the DST™. No other source of information will be as informative or accurate concerning the content and construction of the DST™.

What Does the DST Measure?

The DST™ was designed to measure numerous areas that are related to successful performance as a dispatcher. The DST™ contains cognitive ability questions that are presented in two formats: oral and written. It is important to note that the DST™ does not measure job-specific knowledge or any specific skills that require specialized training. You will not need any specific dispatcher knowledge or trainable skills to succeed on the DST™.

Cognitive Abilities

The DST™ assesses nine distinct cognitive abilities: speech recognition, oral comprehension, selective attention, deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, information ordering, spatial orientation, written expression and written comprehension. These cognitive ability areas have been demonstrated to be essential for success in dispatcher jobs based on job analytic research.

Cognitive abilities are capabilities of our brains to perceive, reason, understand, manipulate and interact with stimuli in the world around us. Cognitive abilities are honed through education, training and practice. Understanding each cognitive ability, considering your personal strengths and weaknesses and allocating time to practice cognitive abilities that you tend to be weak in is one of the best ways you can prepare for the DST™.

In order to better familiarize you with the diversity of questions you will experience in the cognitive section of the DST™, the following table will describe each cognitive ability area and the manner in which it might be demonstrated on the job.

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Cognitive Ability	Description
Deductive Reasoning	Deductive reasoning is the ability to apply rules and principles to make decisions about what to expect from a specific situation. Dispatchers often use this skill when they apply certain procedures (e.g., CPR, Poisoning, etc.) to aid victims in a situation.
Inductive Reasoning	Inductive reasoning is the ability to combine specific pieces of information to arrive at a conclusion about what the causal relationship is between those pieces of information and the resulting outcome. Dispatchers frequently exercise this ability when they take in multiple pieces of information and then make decisions about how to react to a scenario based on that information.
Information Ordering	Information ordering is the ability to identify the best or proper order of given actions or steps. This ability is fundamental to understanding the proper order of steps in performing a specific task safely. Dispatchers must piece together the proper order of events from information provided by the caller.
Oral Comprehension	Oral comprehension is the ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences. Dispatchers use this ability as a primary source of acquiring information from callers.
Selective Attention	Selective attention is the ability to concentrate on a task over a period of time without being distracted. Dispatchers must be able to focus on the information provided by the caller in the presence of background noise and static.
Spatial Orientation	Spatial orientation is the ability to understand how to navigate within spaces or how to get from one point to another. Dispatchers require this ability to assign proper units to incidents based upon their proximity, and need to be able to provide responding units with information of how to get to an incident scene.
Speech Recognition	Speech Recognition is the ability to identify and understand the speech of another person. Dispatchers interact with callers as their primary job and must be able to understand the speech of callers.
Written Comprehension	Written comprehension is simply the ability to read the English language and understand what is being communicated. This involves an understanding of vocabulary, grammatical structure, punctuation and literary style. Dispatchers are required to read and understand a vast amount of training materials and are confronted with on-going professional training throughout their career that is presented in a written format. Dispatchers also have to read and understand policies, procedures and other written material.
Written Expression	Written expression is the ability to communicate intended thoughts using the English language. This ability requires an understanding of vocabulary, grammatical structure, punctuation and syntax. Dispatchers are responsible for taking notes from callers and creating reports of incidents, as well as communicating information through logs and records; therefore, dispatchers must be able to communicate intelligently and professionally via the written word. It is necessary to understand how to spell common words, properly use and pair parts of language (e.g., nouns, verbs, articles, etc.), punctuate sentences properly, and compose meaningful sentences.

Your performance can be dramatically improved by practicing these specific cognitive abilities. Often, when individuals fail to answer a question correctly, they do so because they are unable to determine the method by which the problem should be solved. This study guide will review the proper methods of solving each type of question presented in the written format section of

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the DST™. Those question types are: Deductive Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Information Ordering, Spatial Orientation, Written Comprehension and Written Expression. Later in this guide, sample cognitive ability questions will be presented that will allow you to practice these methods, assess your abilities and address your areas of weakness.

Questions Presented Orally

The first section of the DST™ measures a wide array of cognitive dimensions. The questions in this section are presented in an oral format. You will be asked to listen to a scenario, take notes, and then answer orally-presented questions regarding the scenario you just heard. These scenarios will only be presented once and the questions will only be read following the presentation of the scenario. ***It is very important that you listen carefully during this section of the test.***

How is the DST Scored?

A score will be calculated for each cognitive ability and these sub-scores will be combined into a cognitive section score. Each section score will be combined into a single composite score on a 100-point scale. Each part of the DST™ will contribute to your final test score.

Rules Governing the Testing Process

The DST™ testing process is governed by many rules. Please familiarize yourself with these rules and closely adhere to them so that you are not disqualified from the testing process. If at any time during the test administration you have a question about the rules of the test, you are strongly encouraged to ask that question. It is better to ask a question than to be disqualified for breaking a rule.

Test Security

The administration of the DST™ is a highly secure process. By participating in the testing process, you agree that you will maintain the security and confidentiality of the test content with which you come in contact. This means that you will not share information about the test content, test questions or answer options with anyone before, during or after the testing process by any means. If you are found to have shared secure test content in any manner, you will be barred from future participation in any IOS testing process, and could be subject to legal action. You are prohibited from copying down test content, removing test materials from the testing environment or in any way reproducing or distributing test content.

Prohibited Items

The DST™ is designed to be taken without the assistance of any type of reference materials or electronic aids. You are not allowed to bring the following devices into the testing environment or to use them in the course of taking the test: electronic spelling aids, dictionaries, web-enabled devices, calculators or any devices that assist you in answering the questions contained

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in the DST™. In addition, the following are not allowed in the testing area: backpacks, purses, bags, hats of any kind, sunglasses, PDAs/MP3 Players, watches, calculators, cellular phones, cameras, electronic devices of any kind, mechanical pencils/pens/erasers, beverage/water bottle labels, and any other items determined inappropriate by testing proctors. If any prohibited items are discovered on or near your test area, you will be disqualified from the testing process.

Sign-in

You will be required to have a valid government-issued photo identification (e.g., a driver's license, military ID, Passport) in order to be allowed into the testing process. You will also be required to provide your notarized PST waiver form at check-in. This waiver may be downloaded from your PST account. If you are unable to have your waiver form notarized prior to your test date, PST will have waiver forms and a notary (for a small fee) available at the test site. Please arrive at least 30 minutes early for this service.

Cheating

Test proctors will be present to monitor the security and fairness of the testing process. If any candidate is determined to have in any way violated test rules or engaged in dishonest behavior, that individual will be removed from the testing process by test proctors and will be disqualified. Any behavior that demonstrates a willful violation of the test rules or dishonest behavior (e.g., viewing another test-taker's answer sheet, answering questions after time expires, sharing answers with other parties) will result in disqualification. You should seek to avoid the appearance of any wrong-doing throughout the test-taking process. Keep your eyes on your testing materials and do not engage in conversation with other test-takers during or after the test.

Using the Answer Sheet

You will record your answers on a computer-read answer sheet. This type of sheet, sometimes referred to as a Scantron form, is highly sensitive. Be careful not to make errant marks on the answer sheet. Do not use the answer sheet as scratch paper; you may use your test booklet as scratch paper. Fill in all answer spaces according to the instructions provided prior to the administration of the test. Ensure that your answers are legible and are clearly and darkly marked. Also, frequently check to make sure that the number of the question that you are answering corresponds to the number on the answer sheet.

Responding to Test Questions

No additional points are deducted for marking incorrect responses; therefore, it is in your best interest to answer all questions contained in the DST™. Your failure to answer all questions could have a detrimental effect on your test score. It is advisable to make an educated guess on a test question rather than leaving the question blank.

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There are four answer options for each DST™ cognitive ability question, thus random guessing affords you a 25 percent chance of correctly responding to any given question (as compared to zero percent if you leave a question blank). If you are uncertain about the correct answer, eliminate options that you feel are clearly incorrect and then guess the correct answer from the remaining answer options. By using this method, you will increase your probability of correctly responding to questions when guessing. The table below demonstrates how the probability of success increases when you are able to eliminate incorrect answer options. As you can see, using a process of elimination and making your best educated guess is the best strategy for the DST™.

Possible Answer Choices	1	2	3	4
Probability when Guessing	100%	50%	33%	25%

If you are having trouble identifying the correct answer for a question, it may be beneficial to skip the question and come back to it as time allows. This will keep you from wasting valuable time on questions that you are less likely to respond to accurately.

Time Management

The testing process will consist of two distinct sections. The first section will present questions in an oral format. The second section will present questions in a written format. Both sections assess cognitive ability skills that are required to perform the job of a dispatcher.

Because of the uniqueness of the orally-presented section of the DST, you should keep the following points in mind:

- Space is provided in the test booklet for you to take notes during the orally presented scenarios.
- The questions, as well as scenarios, are only presented orally; be sure to listen carefully throughout the entire section.
- Listen carefully and make sure you are marking response options when prompted by the orally presented instructions. If you fall behind, you will be unable to hear the question or scenario again.

The DST™ contains 70 cognitive test questions. In Section I, 20 cognitive questions are presented orally; and in Section II, 50 questions are presented in a written format. You will be given only a few moments to respond to questions in Section I after the scenario and questions have been presented. In Section II, you will be able allowed to 100 minutes to answer the questions in Section II. The time allowed to complete each test section should be sufficient to answer all questions. It is your responsibility to manage your time effectively so that you can complete the test, in its entirety, in the allotted time period.

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Test Section	*# of Questions*	*Time Allowed*
Section I – Orally Presented Questions	20	35 minutes
Section II – Written Cognitive Questions	50	100 minutes

Test Etiquette

It is important that you be respectful to other test takers seated near you. Do not make loud noises or engage in distracting behavior during the course of the test administration. Once the testing process begins, you may not leave your table/desk without first being acknowledged by a test proctor. If you complete a test section and must wait prior to the beginning of the next section, please sit quietly. You may wish to use any free time to review your answers for accuracy and ensure you have answered all the questions for that section.

Test Preparation

Ideally, you have weeks or months remaining before the administration of the DST™. We recommend that you use this time to systematically prepare for the test. Your preparation should involve four simple steps:

1. Review the test dimensions and rules outlined in this Study Guide.
2. Review the cognitive example and practice questions and attempt to answer them correctly.
3. Identify your developmental needs by noting the types of questions for which you struggle to provide answers.
4. Practice responding to questions in your weak areas until you are better able to arrive at the correct answers.

This guide was developed to assist you in identifying your developmental needs. Improving your weak cognitive areas is the single best way to increase your performance on the test.

Example Cognitive Ability Questions

In this section you will be presented with one sample test question for each of the five question types, which are presented in a written format, that measure specific cognitive ability areas . For each question type you will be presented with:

- A sample question that is highly similar to the questions contained in the related DST™ section
- A discussion regarding the ability area that the test question is measuring
- A recommendation regarding how you should go about answering the question
- An explanation of the correctness/incorrectness of each of the answer options
- An analysis of common mistakes that can be made in answering that particular type of question

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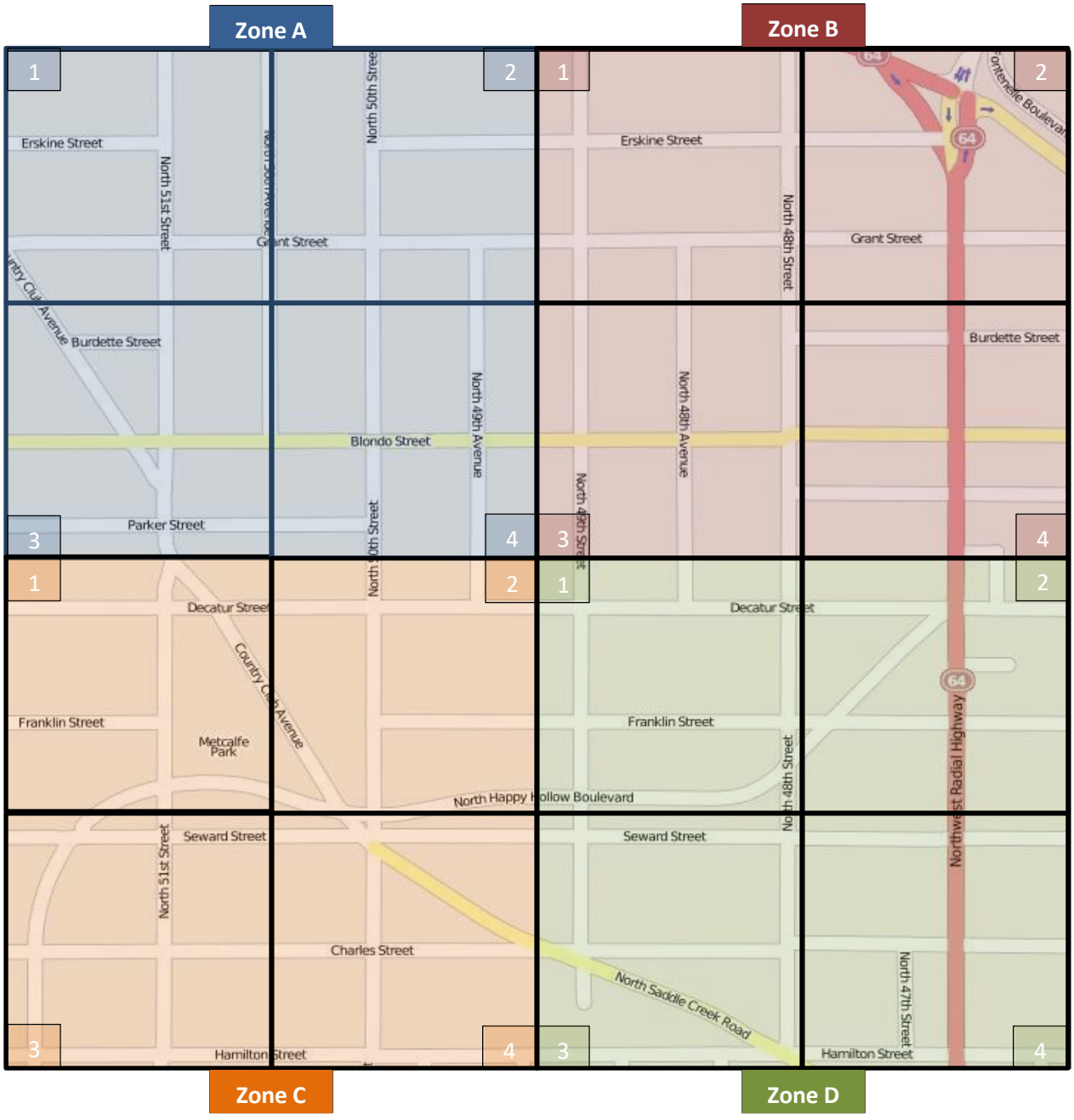
Example Question 1: Spatial-Orientation / Deductive Reasoning

Use the following map and tables to make decisions regarding the dispatching of emergency vehicles. The map is divided into four zones (A-D) and each zone contains four areas (1-4). The tables identify all emergency vehicles, the zones in which they can be dispatched and their current status. The "status" column will also indicate the vehicles' location. Vehicles can only be dispatched within allowed zones and when they are "open." The nearest emergency vehicle should be dispatched. If there are not enough available units to dispatch based on the information provided, units from other departments should be called.



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Incident Types	Initial Response
Traffic accident - injuries reported	3 police units, 1 engine, 2 EMS
Traffic accident - no injuries reported	1 police unit, 1 EMS
Traffic accident - fire reported	2 police units, 2 engines, 2 EMS
Non-violent crime (no weapons or threat of violence)	1 police unit
Violent crime (weapons involved or threat of violence)	4 police units, 1 EMS
Medical emergency	1 police unit, 2 EMS
Water-involved emergency/rescue	2 police units, 1 water, 1 ladder, 1 battalion, 1 EMS
Structural collapse/rescue	3 police units, 1 rescue, 2 engines, 2 ladders, 1 battalion, 2 EMS
Smoke showing – residential structure	1 police unit, 2 engines, 1 battalion, 2 EMS
Smoke showing – commercial/industrial	1 police unit, 2 engines, 1 ladder, 1 battalion, 2 EMS
Fire showing – residential structure	2 police units, 3 engines, 1 ladder, 1 battalion, 2 EMS
Fire showing – commercial/industrial	4 police units, 4 engines, 2 ladders, 1 battalion, 2 EMS

Police Units	Zones	Status	Fire Units	Zones	Status	EMS Units	Zones	Status
PD-1	A,C	Open-A1	Engine-1	A,C	Open-A2	EMS-1	A,B,C	Open-A3
PD-2	B,D	On a call	Engine-2	B,D	Open-B1	EMS-2	B,C,D	Open-B1
PD-3	C,D	Open-C3	Engine-3	C,D	Open-D2	EMS-3	A,C,D	On a call
PD-4	A,C,D	Open-D4	Engine-4	A,B	On a call	EMS-4	A,B,C,D	Open-D1
PD-5	A,B	Open-A4	Ladder-1	A,C	Open-A3	EMS-5	A,B,C,D	Open-C3
PD-6	B,C	Open-C2	Ladder-2	B,D	Open-B4			
PD-7	C,D	Open-D2	Battalion-1	A,B	Open-A2			
PD-8	A,C	On a call	Battalion-2	C,D	Open-D3			
PD-9	B,D	Open-B3	Rescue-1	A,B,C,D	Open-B2			
PD-10	B,C,D	Open-B1	Water-1	A,B,C,D	Open-B2			

1. **An armed robbery was reported at North 48th Avenue and Blondo Street. Which units should be dispatched to the scene?**
    a. PD-5, PD-6, PD-9, PD-10, EMS-4
    b. PD-5, PD-6, PD-9, PD-10, EMS-2
    c. PD-2, PD-6, PD-9, PD-10, EMS-2
    d. PD-9

Take a moment to review this question and attempt to determine the correct answer.

This question measures spatial orientation (your ability to understand how to navigate within spaces) and deductive reasoning (your ability to apply rules and principle to a situation in order

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to make decisions). In this case, you need to consider both the rules provided regarding dispatching units, as well as the information regarding where an incident takes place.

In order to correctly respond to this question, you should first identify the rules appropriate to the scenario. In this case, the incident is an armed robbery. Armed robbery by its definition is a crime involving a deadly weapon. Therefore, you can identify which units are required to respond. Those units are 4 police units and 1 medical (EMS) unit. Based on this information alone, you should be able to remove option “d” as a possibility.

The next step should be to reduce the number of decisions that are needed by identifying the differences between the option choices. For “a,” “b” and “c,” each contain units PD-6, PD-9 and PD-10. Therefore, only units PD-5 and PD-2 and EMS-2 and EMS-4 need to be compared. With your task simplified, next you should identify the location of the incident on the map provided. When you look to the map you should find that the incident occurs in Zone B3. Therefore, you will first look to identify units that have “B” zone coverage.

You will now make two sets of comparisons. In the first comparison, you will compare PD-5 with PD-2. According to the schedule, PD-2 is currently on a call. Therefore, this unit cannot be dispatched. Option choice “c” cannot be the correct answer. In your last comparison, you will compare EMS-2 with EMS-4. Both EMS units can cover zone “B.” You will now need to select the unit that is closer to the incident. EMS-2 is located in zone B1 and EMS-4 is located in zone D1. The incident is located slightly south of the middle of zone B3, making zone D1 closer to the incident than zone B1. Therefore, option choice “a” is the correct answer to this question.

All the questions on the DST™ that assess deductive reasoning and spatial orientation will involve these types of mocked dispatcher scenarios.

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Example Question 2: Inductive Reasoning

Following is an example of an inductive reasoning question that might be contained in the DST™.

Please refer to the following information to answer the question below.

Firefighters are at the scene of a traffic accident at the intersection of two major two-way streets. The driver and passenger of one of the vehicles involved in the accident were seriously injured and have been transported to the hospital. While several firefighters work to clear the accident scene, a law enforcement officer talks to witnesses to try and determine the cause of the accident. The witnesses gave the following accounts:

Witness 1: "I was driving west on Highland Ave. and I was right behind a white sedan. As we were proceeding through the intersection, a black sports car collided with the car in front of me. As there was only one westbound lane on Highland Ave., I was unable to continue past the accident."
Witness 2: "I was driving south on Route 9 and I came to a red light. As I waited, I saw a black sports car in front of me that was waiting to make a left turn from Highland Ave. onto Route 9. It looked like he misjudged the distance between his car and a white sedan driving west on Highland Ave. because he turned right into it."
Witness 3: "I was waiting on Highland Ave. to proceed through the intersection because a black sports car in front of me was waiting to turn left onto Route 9. I think he thought he had time to make the turn, but he ended up slamming into a white car that was headed west on Highland Ave. The airbags went off and everything. It was pretty bad."
Witness 4: "I was driving north on Route 9 and was stopped at a red light. There were several cars in front of me. I heard horns honking and a loud collision, but I couldn't see what happened from where I was."

2. According to the witness accounts, traffic heading _____on Route 9 was _____.

a. west; proceeding through the intersection
b. east; stopped at a red light
c. north; stopped at a red light
d. north; proceeding through the intersection

Take a moment to review this question and attempt to determine the correct answer.

This question measures inductive reasoning, or your ability to combine information to arrive at a conclusion about what happened. In this case, you need to consider the unique perspectives of four different individuals and use them to weave together one cohesive picture.

In order to answer this question, you have to build a diagram, either mentally or on paper, to reconstruct the traffic accident that took place. Based on the account of Witness 1, you know that Highland Ave. is an east-west street with one lane in either direction. Based on the

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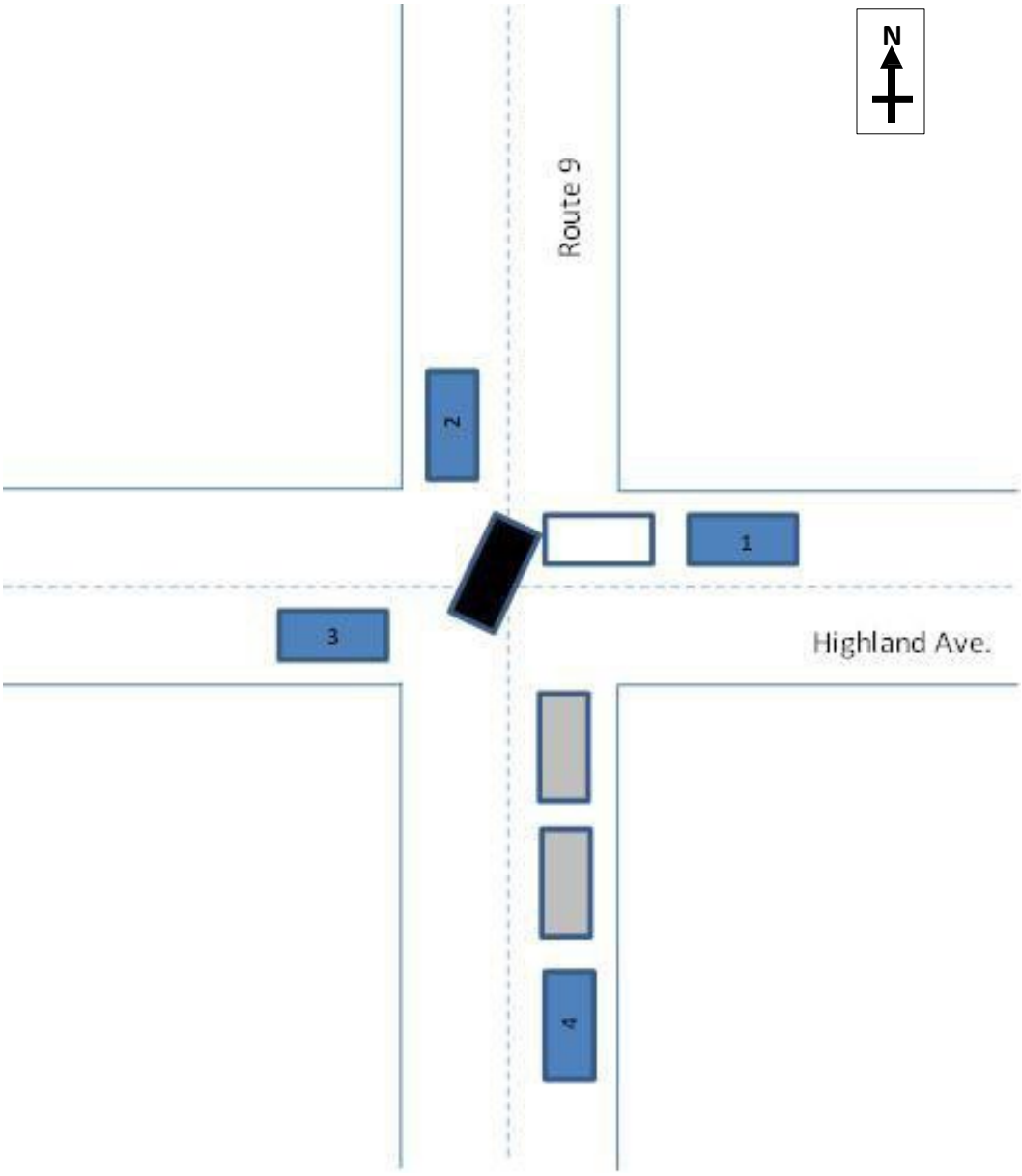
account of Witness 2, you know that Route 9 runs north-south. With this information you can construct the intersection in which the accident took place. By reading each account carefully, you should be able to construct an accurate diagram that includes all the witnesses and the vehicles that collided. The following diagram was constructed solely from the information contained in the four witness accounts.



The best way to answer this question is to build a similar diagram in your test booklet. By referring to this diagram, it should be relatively easy to answer the question. In viewing our diagram we can immediately eliminate answer options “a” and “b” as Route 9 runs north-south rather than east-west. We know from our diagram that a white car headed west on Highland Ave. and a black car that was headed east on Highland Ave., and while in the process of turning

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left, collided in the intersection. Therefore, east-west traffic was moving and north-south traffic was stopped at a red light. Because north-bound traffic was stopped, “c” must be the right answer to the question.

Given the volume of information that you must synthesize, it is necessary to make some form of notes or diagram to generate a reasonable understanding of the situation that is described. Commonly, candidates will error on these types of questions because they are rushing and fail to generate a clear picture of the situation.

All the questions on the DST™ that assess inductive reasoning will involve the synthesis of witness or bystander accounts of various situations, or other pieces of evidence provided about a given incident.

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Example Question 3: Information Ordering

Following is an example of an information ordering question that might be contained in the DST™.

The statements below were taken from a police report. The statements are not in order.

	Statement
1	"I tried to swerve out of the way, but the green car was coming at me so quickly that I was unable to avoid it."
2	"Several people approached me, and one person said they obtained the green car's license plate before they sped away."
3	"The light turned green, so I began to drive through the intersection."
4	"The impact stunned me for a minute, but when I looked out my window I could see the green car speeding down Terrace Ave."
5	"All of a sudden, the green car sped up and tried to make the left-hand turn."
6	"I was driving north on Humboldt St. and came to a stoplight at the intersection of Humboldt St. and Terrace Ave."
7	"The green car slammed into the front driver's side of my car and the airbag went off."
8	"As I headed through the intersection I saw a green car waiting to turn left onto Terrace Ave."

4. What is the correct order of the statements in the police report?
    a. 3, 6, 8, 5, 1, 7, 2, 4
    b. 3, 6, 8, 5, 1, 7, 4, 2
    c. 6, 3, 8, 5, 1, 7, 4, 2
    d. 6, 8, 3, 5, 1, 7, 4, 2

Take a moment to review this question and attempt to determine the correct answer.

This question measures information ordering, or your ability to place the statements in vehicle police report in a logical and meaningful order. This involves determining what step must precede another step to allow the latter step to take place.

In order to answer this question, you must first read through all eight statements. When reading through them, you may wish to make notes by each step indicating that it comes earlier or later in the process. If you identify the two or three steps that come earlier, the two or three steps in the middle, and the two or three steps that come later, you can then go back and rank-order these statements in smaller groups. This takes a complex task and breaks it into more manageable pieces.

These statements provide a sequence of events that took place during a car crash. After reading through all the statements, you will notice that the statements in total can describe the scene prior to the crash, during the crash and just after the crash. Based on this analysis, you can make some quick notes to attempt to place the statements into meaningful groups.

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Statement 1 occurs during the crash as the driver is attempting to avoid the crash but is not able. You should write "during" next to statement 1. Statement 2 must have occurred after the crash because people are approaching the driver with the license number of the hit-and-run vehicle. You should write "after" next to statement 2. Statement 3 must be describing the scene prior to the accident because the driver is beginning to move from a stopped position. You should write "before" next to statement 3. Statement 4 occurs during the accident because it discusses the "impact" of the crash. You should write "during" next to statement 4. Statement 5 must have occurred before the crash. You know from previous statements that the green car was coming at the driver and was the car that sped away following the collision. In statement 5 the green car is speeding up to make a turn. It stands to reason that it is this turn that led to the accident. You should write "before" next to statement 5. Statement 6 describes what the driver was doing prior to the accident. There is no discussion of an accident or the aftermath of an accident, so it stands to reason that this description is what occurred just leading up to the collision. You should write "before" next to statement 6. Statement 7 is clearly a description of the collision. You should write "during" next to statement 7. Statement 8 describes what the driver saw as she began to drive her car through the intersection. She indicates that the green car was waiting to turn so this must have occurred prior to the accident. You should write "before" next to statement 8.

You will note that you have four statements that come before the accident, three during the accident and one following the accident. Since your goal is to place these events in chronological order, you can immediately designate statement 2 as the last event because it is the only one to have occurred after the accident. This quick assessment allows you to immediately dismiss answer option "a" because it does not list statement 2 as the last event.

Looking at the statements that come before the accident; statements 3, 5, 6 and 8; you should attempt to order these chronologically. You will notice that statement 6 is likely the first event in the series because this statement has the driver approaching a stoplight and, seemingly, stopping her car. Because the car is stopped, it would make sense that the next event would have the light turning green to allow the driver to proceed. Statement 3 fits as the second event. Statement 8 would be the third event because it has the car moving through the intersection. This statement also points to the fourth statement as the driver sees the green car that is going to create the accident. This leaves statement 5 to be the fourth in the series. So, of these first four statements, we can organize them as follows: 6, 3, 8 and 5. Without going any further, you could select answer option "c" as the correct response based on your organization of the first four statements.

For the sake of thoroughness, we will continue to organize the next three statements: 1, 4 and 7. Statement 1 must come first because it describes the last moment before the crash when the driver tries to "swerve out of the way" to avoid the crash. Statement 7 would be next because it describes the actual impact, while statement 4 would be last because it has the green car fleeing the scene. So the order of the middle events is as follows: 1, 7 and 4. The entire sequence is 6, 3, 8, 5, 1, 7, 4 and 2. You can look back at answer option "c" and confirm that it does indeed properly list the entire sequence.

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Once you have determined the proper sequence, read the statements through in order and make sure that the sequence makes logical sense. If so, you have found the appropriate solution.

The most common mistake that is made in information ordering questions is failing to read all the steps before beginning the organization process. You cannot determine the order of statements, or even categorize them effectively, until you have considered all the choices. Another common mistake is failing to review the steps in order after you have drawn a conclusion regarding their order. This last check ensures that the sequence is logical. Often you will find that it makes sense to switch one or two of the steps around to allow the sequence to flow better.

All the questions that assess information ordering in the DST™ will be very similar to this question. Some may only ask you to identify the first few or the last few steps, rather than the sequence of all the steps. Other questions will ask you to identify the placement of one statement in terms of what other statement it precedes or succeeds. Regardless, all the questions will require that you properly order the statements from first to last. If you always work out the full order of the statements, you will be able to easily answer any question that will be asked about those statements.

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Example Question 4: Written Comprehension

Following is an example of a written comprehension question that might be contained in the DST™.

Please refer to the following passage to answer the question below.

The skill of interviewing has been compared to playing a piano: there are necessary skills, but the subtleties differentiate an amateur from a professional. Police use interviewing as a dynamic tool to gather information about a serious crime or a simple traffic accident. An interview is often confused with an interrogation; the difference is that an interview is non-accusatory. Interviews tend to be organic and unstructured and may involve more than one individual. Though there are many different types of interviews, each technique seeks to accomplish one common goal: truth.

There are two basic methods that interviewers use in their pursuit of truth: the directive approach and the nondirective approach. In the directive approach, the interviewer is very much in control. They set the pace and ask questions that result in a very structured interview. This approach is often used in criminal investigations, as it allows the interviewer to maintain control and direct the questioning. The directive approach results in a very efficient interview and can be conducted by a less-experienced interviewer. Because of the structure, the interview can be more easily replicated if more than one individual needs to be questioned. The nondirective approach gives more control to the interviewee. The interviewer has greater flexibility and the interviewee will generally provide more information. When using the nondirective approach, the interviewee is less likely to realize what goal the interviewer has in mind. This approach results in longer interviews and requires a more experienced interviewer.

Interviewers set the tone for the interview in the first few minutes they spend with the interviewee. It is important for interviewers to establish a good relationship with the interviewee by being courteous and avoiding the use of confusing language (law enforcement-specific terms or legal jargon). The interviewer should not be reactive, but keep his or her emotions and feelings in check. In order to obtain accurate information during the interview, the interviewer should take notes, paying attention to what is said and the body language of the interviewee. Depending on the interview subject, the interviewer may choose to take a sympathetic or logical approach. A sympathetic approach, in which the interviewer empathizes with the interviewee in order to gain confidence, would be best used with an individual who is a victim. The logical approach, a technique in which the interviewer conducts themselves in a no-nonsense manner and the impression is given that the interviewer has the answers and the interviewee is simply being given the opportunity to explain themselves.

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3. According to the passage, what are the benefits of an interview conducted with the directive approach?

a. The interview can be easily replicated and administered to more than one individual.
b. The interviewee is given control, allowing them to elaborate and provide more information.
c. The interviewee is less likely to know what the interviewer has in mind.
d. The interviewer gains the interviewee's confidence by conducting themselves in a sympathetic manner.

Take a moment to review this question and attempt to determine the correct answer.

This question measures written comprehension, or your ability to read a lengthy passage and synthesize the theme of that passage into a single summary statement. In order to do this, you have to identify what the author sought to communicate and select the answer option that best summarizes that thought.

The best strategy to use in responding to reading comprehension questions, or any question that requires you to read a lot of information, is to first review the question. Knowing what you are trying to answer will allow you to read the passage with a keen eye. After you review the question, carefully read through the passage and keep in mind the question that you are trying to answer. Take your time reading the passage. Rushing or skipping over sections will only make it difficult to arrive at the correct answer. Worse, you will probably end up having to read the passage again. So, slow down and read for understanding the first time.

As you read each paragraph it is helpful to either underline key sentences that help summarize the paragraph or make short notes in the margins to summarize the theme of each paragraph. Following are sample notes you might keep to summarize each paragraph:

- Paragraph 1: interviews are non-accusatory, unstructured and seek truth
- Paragraph 2: two main techniques; directive and non-directive
- Paragraph 3: interviewer should be courteous and take-notes; decides on sympathetic or logical approach

The question asks you about a specific section of the reading passage. Specifically, the benefits of a directive approach. By reviewing your summary notes, you will determine that paragraph two deals with this subject. You can then return to paragraph two to find the answer.

Sentences 2 through 6 deal with the directive approach. These sentences identify three benefits: the interviewer maintains control and can direct the conversation, the interview can be conducted by less-experienced interviewers and the interview can be easily replicated. By knowing that these are the three benefits of the directive approach, you can systematically review the answer options to see which one best fits. Answer "a" fits with the benefits of a directive approach cause it notes that it can be easily replicated and administered to more than one individual. After recognizing that "a" fits, you should still review the other options to

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ensure that they appear wrong. Option “b” is inaccurate because the directive approach gives control to the interviewer not the interviewee. Option “c” is a wrong answer because it describes characteristics of the nondirective approach rather than the directive approach. Option “d” is wrong because it does not discuss anything related to directive or nondirective approaches, but rather content discussed in paragraph 3. Based on this analysis, you should select “a” as the right answer.

The most common error you are likely to make when responding to a question like this is to select an answer that sounds correct, because the information does come from the passage, but is not relevant or accurate based on the specific question that is asked. Your challenge is to carefully read and understand the question that is asked.

All written comprehension questions in the DST™ will contain a focal passage and questions that are highly similar to the question you see here.

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Example Question 5: Written Expression

Following is an example of a written expression question that might be contained in the DST™.

For the following question, please choose the line that contains the misspelled word, grammatical error or punctuation error. Only one of the lines will contain an error.

4. **I. Officer Gunderson was recently presented**
II. with an award for outstanding service. While he was
III. off duty, the officer pursued and successfully captured
IV. a man who attempted to rob a conveneince store.

a. Line I.
b. Line II.
c. Line III.
d. Line IV.

Take a moment to review this question and attempt to determine the correct answer.

This question measures written expression, specifically the ability to identify improper grammar, spelling or punctuation. To the extent that you understand how to use grammar/syntax, spelling and punctuation appropriately, you should be able to recognize when a mistake is made.

In order to answer this question, you should first read it through and see if any error noticeably stands out to you. If so, carefully verify that the error is indeed an error. Make sure you can come up with a grammar, punctuation or spelling rule that is clearly broken in this instance. If there is not an error that immediately stands out, dissect the reading passage line by line. Go through Line I and see if there are any grammar, punctuation or spelling errors. Move through each line doing the same thing.

In Example Question 5, the only error occurs in Line IV. The word “conveneince” is misspelled. Specifically, the “ei” combination should be “ie.” There is a simple phase that is useful for remembering the order of these vowels in most words: “i before e except after c.” This means that the “i” will almost always come before the “e,” unless this letter combination comes right after the letter “c.” The correct answer is “d.”

There are many rules that govern the use of the English language. It would be wise to consult a text that teaches grammar and style rules or a writer’s style manual. Please note that the DST™ will only ask questions about conventional and commonly accepted practices. Style manuals often disagree on lesser grammar and style rules. Also, any misspelled words for which questions are asked will be commonly used words that the majority of individuals should be capable of spelling.

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In addition to the example question noted previously, you will also see questions that ask you to fill in a word that properly completes the sentence. Often, this will require you to identify the proper tense or number of a verb, the proper number of a noun, the proper pronoun or the proper form of a commonly misused word. Another question type will contain a brief paragraph that must be summarized in a single sentence. The sentence you choose must be the most accurate and succinct summation of the information in the paragraph. This type of question will assess your ability to use language economically and accurately.

Following is a brief summary of common and important grammar and syntax rules. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to communicate common rules and errors with which you should be familiar.

Use of Apostrophes and Quotation Marks

- If you are trying to communicate the possessive form of a singular noun, generally you add " 's" to the word.
- If the noun is plural, generally, you add the apostrophe after the "s."
- The possessive form of "it" does not contain an apostrophe (the apostrophe is reserved for the contraction of "it is").
- Possessive pronouns do not use apostrophes (e.g., hers, yours).
- When contracting words, the apostrophe is intended to take the place of the missing letter(s) (e.g., "it's" for "it is," "couldn't" for "could not").
- Generally, a quote contained within a sentence is preceded by a comma outside the quotation marks and/or is followed by a comma inside the quotation marks (e.g., He said, "I want to go." "I want to go," he said.)

Subject-Verb Agreement and Verb Tense Agreement

- The number (singular or plural) of the subject dictates the number of the verb (e.g., The girls **run** to school. The girl **runs** to school.)
- When the subject is a pronoun, the pronoun number and verb number must agree.
- He/she/his/her coincide with singular nouns and they/their coincides with plural nouns.
- The verb tense (present, past, future) should remain consistent within a summary or description.

Commonly Misused Words

- Numerous words are commonly confused are misused including, among/between, either/neither, or/nor, can/may, whether/weather, affect/effect, farther/further, then/than, that/which, their/there/they're and to/too.

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Punctuation

- Commas are used to separate items in a series, to separate a dependent clause from an independent clause, after certain adverbs (like “therefore”) and before a conjunction leading into an independent clause.
- Semi-colons are used between independent clauses linked with a conjunctive adverb, between closely related independent clauses where a conjunction is not used and in a series that contains internal commas.

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Diagnostic Cognitive Ability Questions

In this section you will be presented with practice items for each of the seven cognitive ability areas (a total of 15 questions). These questions are presented so that you can practice each of the cognitive ability areas and diagnose your strengths and weaknesses. The correct answers for these questions are contained in an answer key on the last page of this guide.

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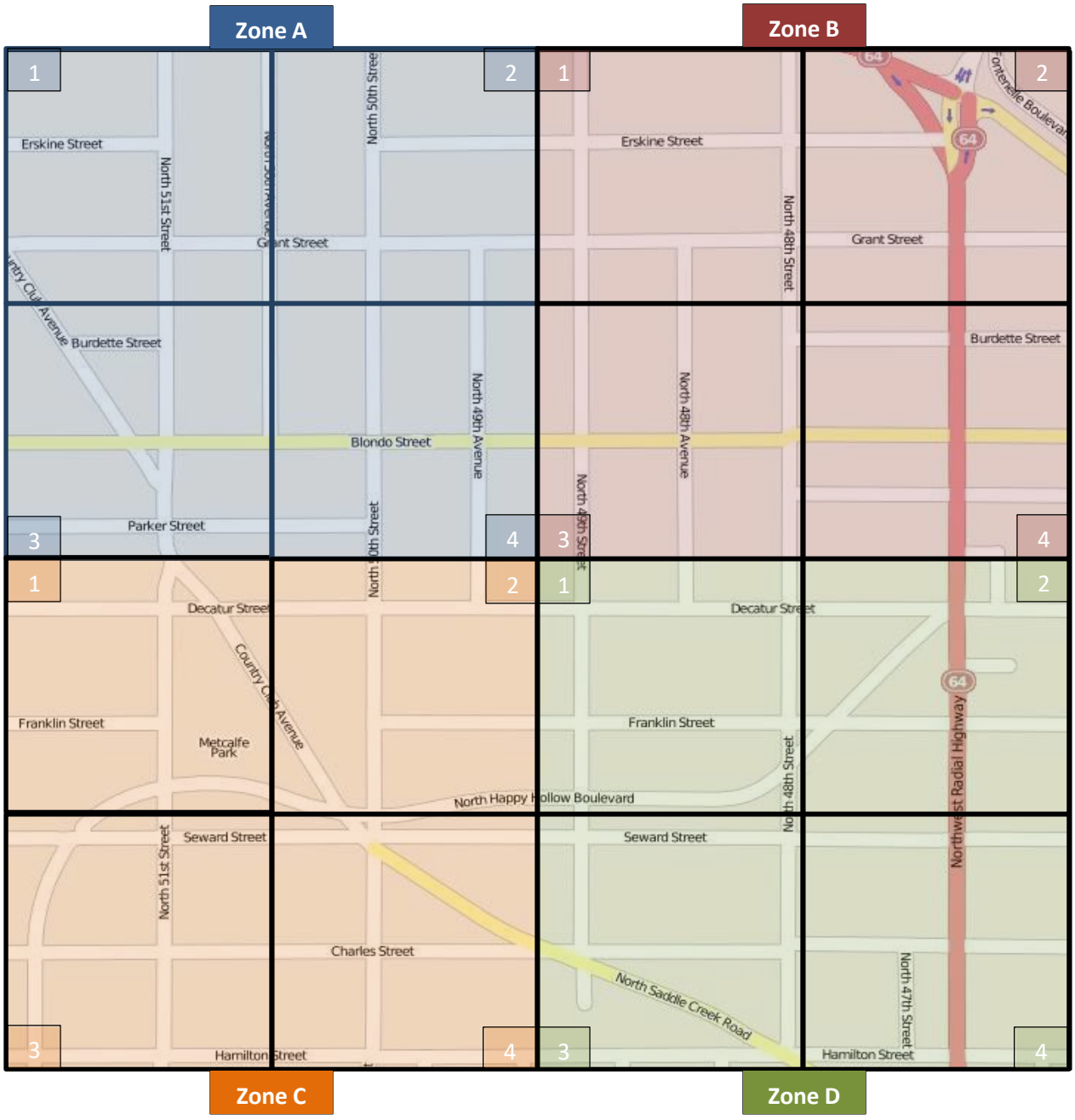
Diagnostic Questions 1-2: Deductive Reasoning / Spatial Orientation

For questions 1-2, use the following map and tables. Use this information to make decisions regarding the dispatching of emergency vehicles. The map is divided into four zones (A-D) and each zone contains four areas (1-4). The tables identify all emergency vehicles, the zones in which they can be dispatched and their current status. The "status" column will also indicate the vehicles' location. Vehicles can only be dispatched within allowed zones and when they are "open." The nearest emergency vehicle should be dispatched. If there are not enough available units to dispatch based on the information provided, units from other departments should be called.



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Incident Types	Initial Response
Traffic accident - injuries reported	3 police units, 1 engine, 2 EMS
Traffic accident - no injuries reported	1 police unit, 1 EMS
Traffic accident - fire reported	2 police units, 2 engines, 2 EMS
Non-violent crime (no weapons or threat of violence)	1 police unit
Violent crime (weapons involved or threat of violence)	4 police units, 1 EMS
Medical emergency	1 police unit, 2 EMS
Water-involved emergency/rescue	2 police units, 1 water, 1 ladder, 1 battalion, 1 EMS
Structural collapse/rescue	3 police units, 1 rescue, 2 engines, 2 ladders, 1 battalion, 2 EMS
Smoke showing – residential structure	1 police unit, 2 engines, 1 battalion, 2 EMS
Smoke showing – commercial/industrial	1 police unit, 2 engines, 1 ladder, 1 battalion, 2 EMS
Fire showing – residential structure	2 police units, 3 engines, 1 ladder, 1 battalion, 2 EMS
Fire showing – commercial/industrial	4 police units, 4 engines, 2 ladders, 1 battalion, 2 EMS

Police Units	Zones	Status	Fire Units	Zones	Status	EMS Units	Zones	Status
PD-1	A,C	Open-A1	Engine-1	A,C	Open-A2	EMS-1	A,B,C	Open-A3
PD-2	B,D	On a call	Engine-2	B,D	Open-B1	EMS-2	B,C,D	Open-B1
PD-3	C,D	Open-C3	Engine-3	C,D	Open-D2	EMS-3	A,C,D	On a call
PD-4	A,C,D	Open-D4	Engine-4	A,B	On a call	EMS-4	A,B,C,D	Open-D1
PD-5	A,B	Open-A4	Ladder-1	A,C	Open-A3	EMS-5	A,B,C,D	Open-C3
PD-6	B,C	Open-C2	Ladder-2	B,D	Open-B4			
PD-7	C,D	Open-D2	Battalion-1	A,B	Open-A2			
PD-8	A,C	On a call	Battalion-2	C,D	Open-D3			
PD-9	B,D	Open-B3	Rescue-1	A,B,C,D	Open-B2			
PD-10	B,C,D	Open-B1	Water-1	A,B,C,D	Open-B2			

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1. **A warehouse fire has broken out at the Northwest Radial Fireworks Company. Reports have come in indicating that flames are visible from the street. The warehouse is located at the corner of Highway 64 and Grant Street. Which units should be dispatched to the scene?**
    a. PD-5, PD-6, PD-9, PD-10, Engine-1, Engine-2, Engine-3, Request for additional Engine, Ladder-2, Request for an additional Ladder, Battalion-1, EMS-2, EMS-4
    b. PD-2, PD-6, PD-9, PD-10, Engine-1, Engine-2, Engine-3, Request for additional Engine, Ladder-1, Ladder-2, Battalion-1, EMS-1, EMS-2
    c. PD-5, PD-6, PD-9, PD-10, Engine-2, Request for three additional Engines, Ladder-2, Request for an additional Ladder, Battalion-1, EMS-1, EMS-2
    d. PD-5, PD-6, PD-9, PD-10, Engine-2, Request for three additional Engines, Ladder-2, Request for an additional Ladder, Battalion-1, EMS-2, EMS-4

2. **A call has come in from a woman reporting that her husband is unconscious and not responding. The call is located at the corner of North 51st Street and Franklin Street. Which units should be dispatched to the scene?**
    a. PD-9, EMS-1, EMS-5
    b. PD-3, EMS-1, EMS-5
    c. PD-9, EMS-4, EMS-5
    d. PD-3, EMS-4, EMS-5

Deductive Reasoning Answer Sheet

1. A B C D
2. A B C D

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Diagnostic Questions 3-4: Inductive Reasoning

Please use the following information to answer questions 3-4.

Firefighters are at the scene of a traffic accident at the intersection of two major two-way streets. The driver and passenger of one of the vehicles involved in the accident were seriously injured and have been transported to the hospital. While several firefighters work to clear the accident scene, a law enforcement officer talks to witnesses to try and determine the cause of the accident. The witnesses gave the following accounts:

Witness 1: "I was driving west on Highland Ave. and I was immediately behind a white sedan. As we were proceeding through the intersection, a black sports car collided with the car in front of me. As there was only one westbound lane on Highland Ave., I was unable to continue past the accident."
Witness 2: "I was driving south on Route 9 and I came to a red light. As I waited, I saw a black sports car in front of me that was waiting to make a left turn from Highland Ave. onto Route 9. It looked like he misjudged the distance between his car and a white sedan driving west on Highland Ave. because he turned right into it."
Witness 3: "I was waiting on Highland Ave. to proceed through the intersection because a black sports car in front of me was waiting to turn left onto Route 9. I think he thought he had time to make the turn, but he ended up slamming into a white car that was headed west on Highland Ave. The airbags went off and everything. It was pretty bad."
Witness 4: "I was driving north on Route 9 and was stopped at a red light. There were several cars in front of me. I heard horns honking and a loud collision, but I couldn't see what happened from where I was."

3. According to the witness accounts, the black sports car _____.

a. had the right of way
b. was stopped at a red light
c. should have yielded to eastbound traffic
d. should have yielded to westbound traffic

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4. Based on the information gathered from the witnesses, what likely happened to cause the accident?

a. The white sedan ran a red light and collided with a black sports car, which had the right of way on Highland Ave.
b. The black sports car was waiting in the intersection to turn and head north on Route 9. He collided with a white sedan that had the right of way.
c. The black sports car was waiting in the intersection to turn and head south on Route 9. He collided with a white sedan that was driving east on Highland Ave.
d. The white sedan was waiting in the intersection to turn and head north on Route 9. He collided with a black sports car that had the right of way.

Inductive Reasoning Answer Sheet

3. A B C D
4. A B C D

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Diagnostic Questions 5-6: Information Ordering

The statements below were taken from a police report. The statements are not in order.

	Statement
1	"When I was sitting at my computer, I heard a loud crash outside."
2	"I arrived home from dinner with friends around 9:00 p.m. and parked my car in the driveway."
3	"I approached my car and saw that my stereo had been ripped out of the dash."
4	"Once inside, I decided to check my email before getting ready for bed."
5	"After I saw what had been stolen, I went back inside to call the police."
6	"I walked outside and saw glass all over the driveway. Whoever broke in didn't leave anything behind."
7	"Right after I parked I walked down to the end of the driveway to grab the empty trash bins. I put them on the side of the house and went inside."
8	"I went to the window to see what the noise was and I saw that my car windows had been broken."

5. What are the first three statements in the police report?

a. 2, 7, 4
b. 7,2, 4
c. 1, 8, 6
d. 2, 4, 1

6. What happened immediately after the victim went to the window to see what caused the noise?

a. 8 – "I went to the window to see what the noise was and I saw that my car windows had been broken."
b. 3 – "I approached my car and saw that my stereo had been ripped out of the dash."
c. 1 – "When I was sitting at my computer, I heard a loud crash outside."
d. 6 – "I walked outside and saw glass all over the driveway. Whoever broke in didn't leave anything behind."

Information Ordering Answer Sheet

5. A B C D
6. A B C D

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Diagnostic Questions 7-8: Written Comprehension

Please refer to the following passage to answer the questions below.

The skill of interviewing has been compared to playing a piano: there are necessary skills, but the subtleties differentiate an amateur from a professional. Police use interviewing as a dynamic tool to gather information about a serious crime or a simple traffic accident. An interview is often confused with an interrogation; the difference is that an interview is non-accusatory. Interviews tend to be organic and unstructured and may involve more than one individual. Though there are many different types of interviews, each technique seeks to accomplish one common goal: truth.

There are two basic methods that interviewers use in their pursuit of truth: the directive approach and the nondirective approach. In the directive approach, the interviewer is very much in control. They set the pace and ask questions that result in a very structured interview. This approach is often used in criminal investigations, as it allows the interviewer to maintain control and direct the questioning. The directive approach results in a very efficient interview and can be conducted by a less-experienced interviewer. Because of the structure, the interview can be more easily replicated if more than one individual needs to be questioned. The nondirective approach gives more control to the interviewee. The interviewer has greater flexibility and the interviewee will generally provide more information. When using the nondirective approach, the interviewee is less likely to realize what goal the interviewer has in mind. This approach results in longer interviews and required a more experienced interviewer.

Interviewers set the tone for the interview in the first few minutes they spend with the interviewee. It is important for interviewers to establish a good relationship with the interviewee by being courteous and avoiding the use of confusing language (law enforcement-specific terms or legal jargon). The interviewer should not be reactive, but keep his or her emotions and feelings in check. In order to obtain accurate information during the interview, the interviewer should take notes, paying attention to what is said and the body language of the interviewee. Depending on the interview subject, the interviewer may choose to take a sympathetic or logical approach. A sympathetic approach, in which the interviewer empathizes with the interviewee in order to gain confidence, would be best used with an individual who is a victim. The logical approach, a technique in which the interviewer conducts themselves in a no-nonsense manner and the impression is given that the interviewer has the answers and the interviewee is simply being given the opportunity to explain themselves.

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7. What is the difference between an interview and an interrogation?

a. An interrogation is usually conducted over a long, uninterrupted period of time, while an interview can be conducted in segments.
b. The logical approach is generally reserved for use in an interrogation, while interviews are conducted with a sympathetic approach.
c. An interview is less structured than an interrogation and is non-accusatory.
d. Interrogations are only used when the party is known to be guilty.

8. Which of the following is the best summary of the passage?

a. Interviews can be conducted many different ways, but there are certain methods that have proven to be more effective than others.
b. Interviews, though used in the pursuit of truth, can take many different forms and can be adapted to each unique situation.
c. Though interviews and interrogations are often confused, they are conducted in different manners and generally have slightly different goals.
d. Only the most experienced and skillful interviewers can have a successful interview that results in the unveiling of truth.

Written Comprehension Answer Sheet

7. A B C D
8. A B C D

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Diagnostic Questions 9-10: Written Expression

Please select the word that best completes the sentence.

9. Given the stressful nature of dispatcher careers, many departments _____ counseling and debriefing services to their employees.

a. provides
b. provide
c. provided
d. provider

Use the following information to answer question 10.

A new type of crime has been on the rise since the creation of "social networking" websites: cyberstalking. Now that anyone can easily create their own website, upload photos or maintain a profile on a social networking site, cyberstalkers can use email, instant messages or even video chats to threaten, intimidate or otherwise harass their victims. Cyberstalking operates in a similar way to offline stalking: cyberstalkers will make unwanted contact and attempt to scare, control or coerce their victims. Cyberstalking is increasingly expanding among young people because, unlike older generations, today's youths have been exposed to technology at a very young age. Many adolescents use computers regularly and may even have their own cell phone. Though crimes such as cyberstalking are difficult to completely eradicate, there are practical steps internet users can take to protect themselves from online harassment. Personal emails and passwords should be kept private. Choosing a gender-neutral email address or alias can be beneficial, especially since women are often targets of cyberstalking. Change website or social networking security settings to block unapproved users from viewing your personal information or photographs. Safeguard your passwords and change them on a regular basis. If you find yourself victimized by a cyberstalker or online harassment, save and document all communication and contact attempts. This information can be presented to law enforcement officials as evidence.

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10. What is the main idea presented in this paragraph?

a. Internet users put themselves at risk when they create websites or online profiles; by avoiding these things, the opportunity for online stalking can be lessened.
b. "Social networking" can be blamed for the rise in cybercrime, especially cyberstalking.
c. By taking practical steps, internet users can protect themselves from cyberstalking and other internet crimes.
d. Cyberstalking is a form of crime that can target anyone, but taking practical steps can lessen your chance of becoming a victim.

Written Expression Answer Sheet

9. A B C D
10. A B C D

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Orally Presented Questions

The first section of the DST™ measures a wide array of cognitive dimensions. The questions in this section are presented in an oral format. You will be asked to listen to a scenario, take notes, and then answer orally-presented questions regarding the scenario you just heard. These scenarios will only be presented once. Following the presentation of the scenario, a question will be presented orally. The question and possible answer choices will only be read once and you will only have a few moments to respond prior to the presentation of the next scenario.

For this section of the examination it is very important that you listen carefully. Space for note taking will be provided for you for each scenario in the test booklet. Each scenario will be a mocked interaction between a dispatcher and a caller. Various details about an incident will be described by the caller, and you will be asked to recall specific details about that incident.

Before the Test

Your performance on the DST™, in part, depends on your physical and mental readiness. Following are some suggestions for performing optimally:

- Review the test rules contained in this Study Guide just prior to the test date.
- Plan to arrive to the test site on time by securing directions and leaving yourself plenty of time to get to the location (consider traffic and unforeseen occurrences).
- Get a good night's sleep the nights leading up to the test administration.
- Eat a good meal prior to the test.
- Bring appropriate sign-in materials

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Answer Key

Review your answers from the answer spaces on the previous pages and use the table below to indicate if your answer was correct or incorrect by marking a check in the proper column.

Number	Type	Answer	Correct	Incorrect
1	Deductive Reasoning / Spatial Orientation	D		
2	Deductive Reasoning / Spatial Orientation	B		
3	Inductive Reasoning	D		
4	Inductive Reasoning	B		
5	Information Ordering	A		
6	Information Ordering	D		
7	Written Comprehension	C		
8	Written Comprehension	B		
9	Written Expression	B		
10	Written Expression	D		

Review your correct and incorrect answers. If you missed one or more questions in any single cognitive ability area, you should continue practicing that ability area and review the example question contained earlier in this study guide. The cognitive section of the test is your best opportunity to improve your test score – every question you get correct could substantially improve your ranking.

We wish you success in your pursuit of a dispatcher career!

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Public Safety Selection Experts

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